



- **Include service-learning as a vital instructional strategy in teacher education programs.**

Teacher education programs must include service-learning in the preparation of K–12 educators. It is imperative that those who train teachers understand and embrace service-learning as a viable strategy.

Train Teacher Educators

A 1997 study found that “service-learning is not widely recognized among teacher educators, even though they are engaged in activities that are closely aligned with the philosophy, methods, and pedagogy of service-learning” (Furco 1998, 4). The lack of awareness and acceptance of service-learning among those who train teachers suggests a

disconnection between teacher education programs and K–12 educators.

The understanding of a new strategy occurs when individuals connect new concepts to what they already know (Myers and Pickeral 1997, 19–20). As a first step to understanding service-learning, teacher educators must be provided training that connects service-learning to many of their other teaching strategies, such as project-based learning.

Teacher educators and K–12 teachers should spend time together to develop an understanding of effective service-learning. This collaborative time is crucial for advancing service-learning in teacher education (Erickson and Anderson 1997, 7).

Teacher educators and K–12 educators must discuss service-learning as a teaching strategy, identify ways in which K–12 educators and teacher educators can support each other’s service-learning efforts, and find the most viable ways in which service-learning can be advanced at all levels of schooling.

Include Service-Learning in Teacher Education Programs

Overall, the approach to incorporating service-learning in teacher education must be strategically planned and institutionally driven. When service-learning does exist in teacher education, it is usually the work of one or two faculty members in the teacher education program (Furco 1998, 5).

Efforts to advance service-learning into teacher education cannot rely solely on the efforts of one or two individuals. Greater emphasis must be placed on working with teacher education program coordinators, school of education deans, and other university officials so that service-learning is understood well by everyone in the program and it becomes clear how service-learning fits into the program’s philosophy.

The effort to incorporate service-learning into teacher education must be comprehensive. At a minimum, all teacher education programs should include service-learning among strategies that are taught, have teacher educators use service-learning in their classes, and place student teachers with master teachers who use service-learning effectively.

- ***Experience with service.*** Many teacher candidates often have difficulty putting into practice what they learn from textbooks and lectures in their education courses (Kennedy 1991, 15). It is not enough to talk or read about service-learning; teacher candidates must have a service experience. This experience offers valuable

insight into the benefits of being both a service provider and a learner. It places teacher candidates in the roles that students will experience as service providers when service-learning is the chosen teaching strategy.

However, having a service-learning experience is not enough to ensure that future K–12 teachers will employ service-learning in their classrooms.

- ***Instruction about service-learning.*** Teacher candidates need to receive direct instruction on how to incorporate service-learning into their teaching. Sometimes students are trained and motivated in the theory and practice of service-learning only to be let down when they cannot

Service-Learning Guide California State University, Monterey Bay

Service-learning is a direct expression of the California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB), vision statement. Our university is dedicated to “building partnerships . . . that cross institutional boundaries for innovative instruction . . . and coordinated community service.” As a CSUMB student, you will be involved in service-learning experiences that can enrich your education and expand your knowledge of community programs. The service-learning requirement is CSUMB’s way of stating that preparation for the twenty-first century includes learning through civic engagement, learning through participating in culturally diverse community settings. Your community experience should be a meaningful and exciting way to learn.

We hope your service-learning experience supports you in developing a lifelong commitment to community participation. Our graduates will be needed as active and involved citizens to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. You can make a difference as you become involved in service!

practice it with the full support of their schools (Erickson and Bayless 1996, 12). Methodology courses must, therefore, both teach the essential components of service-learning and provide teacher candidates with opportunities to practice the methodology with the full support of those around them.

- ***Opportunities to practice service-learning.***
An effective way of providing guided practice is to place student teachers with master teachers who use service-learning effectively. Master teachers who can train their student teachers in service-learning play a vital role in encouraging teacher candidates to feel comfortable with service-learning. Teacher candidates can learn how to best use service-learning when they actually implement it.

Incorporate Service-Learning into Programs for Administrative Credentials

Educators in administrative credential programs must discuss the role of principals and other administrators in supporting service-learning. Administrators must learn the strategies necessary to expand the educational institution “beyond the schoolhouse walls,” engage the community, and collaborate successfully with agencies and businesses.

Further Reading Related to This Recommendation

California Department of Education. 1997.
California’s Future: Highly Qualified Teachers for All Students. Final Report of the Advisory Panel on Teacher Education, Induction, and Certification for the Twenty-First Century Schools (SB 1422). Sacramento: California Department of Education.

Teacher Candidates Learn and Practice Service-Learning Methodology

The Department of Professional Studies in Education (DPSE) at California State University, Chico, prepares approximately 330 students annually in programs leading to California teaching credentials. To better integrate service-learning into the teacher preparation program, DPSE has become a partner in a K–12 Partners in Education (PIE) service-learning initiative in the Los Molinos Unified School District.

During seminars offered collaboratively by university faculty and the PIE staff at Dye Creek Preserve, student teachers participate in presentations, discussions, and group work. The candidates:

- Develop an understanding of how service-learning can benefit all students, including special education students and those with different cultural or linguistic backgrounds.
- Know and understand national and California standards for service-learning.
- Develop the skills necessary to design thoughtfully organized service-learning experiences.
- Understand that experience in service-learning provides opportunities for all pupils to combine knowledge and skill and use them in meaningful ways.
- Are prepared to become education professionals who can nurture relationships between pupils despite diverse differences.

Student teachers spend several weeks in one elementary classroom practice teaching before writing and implementing an interdisciplinary thematic unit that incorporates a service component related to the unit’s content.

The Service-Learning Integrated Partnership Project, A University/School Community-Based Service Learning Partnership. Chico: California State University, Chico, 1998.

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- Wade, Rahima C. 1997. "Service-Learning in Preservice Teacher Education." In *Community Service-Learning: A Guide to Including Service in the Public School Curriculum*. Albany: State University of New York Press.